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These are the days when birds come back,
A very few, a bird or two,
To take a backward look.

These are the days when skies resume
The old, old sophistries of June,—
A blue and gold mistake.

Oh, fraud that cannot cheat the bee,
Almost thy plausibility
Induces my belief,

Till ranks of seeds their witness bear,
And softly through the altered air
Hurries a timid leaf!

Oh, sacrament of summer days,
Oh, last communion in the haze
Permit a child to join,

Thy sacred emblems to partake,
Thy consecrated bread to take
And thine immortal wine!

EMILY DICKINSON

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2



PHOTOGRAPH
Beverly Wright

In winter nights
That smoked with ashes
Of forgotten fires
And wind-soot,
She told me the witches' tale —
Of skinny fingers
Brushed against tear-stained ovens.
I hid behind the covers
And shivered at her age-drugged whispers.

Grey grasslands
Of winter
Hid the forest of gingerbread.
Buried, they said —
Stepmothers die in winter.

And from the long shadows
Of snowy afternoons —
To hunch beside ice-mirrors,
To find shadow
Cast from shadow

Earlier winter nights
And the snow fell in deepening mounds
Clouding the sound of her whispers.
The heat of the gas-light,
Held to watch
Our good-night kiss,
Licked the burning flesh
Of many ovens.
And whispers hovered over my bed

Too soon
I woke
Beside the night-lit fires,
And shaking fingers
That wiped burned kisses
From my lips.

Then only
To remember the snows,
To hear them drone,
Not long, not long —
Stepmothers die in winter

Inebriated fool or sorceress,
You stand against the doorway,
Your gnarled blonde hair disguising every feature
Of your face except a swollen nose
And great, crooked teeth behind
A mouth stretched open sideways.
You are not conscious that your stance
Distorts the lankness of a body whose limbs
Converge so awkwardly they seem to have
No center.
You only laugh a wretched, hollow laugh
And toss away the hair, reveal
The haughty face that must have drunk
Its arrogance with the beer.
Your face is worse than void
Because it still has form and still
Forms patterns of insanity
And loss. The eyes are seared
By the searching that's gone out of them.
The body writhes again into another pile
Of drunken dominoes — the base thrusts forward
And the flat, unfemale breasts collapse
Into a cavity that should be at your pelvis.
Only of the feet do you seem to be aware.
All sense is concentrated there
As you smear the ground
In walking, drawing the nail
Of your great toe, grating
Along the surface of the soil.
Where is your nightmare now?
Is it in that foot's deformity that scrapes
Across the sand, or is it in the laugh that falls
Unheard from your drenched, dry throat,
Transferring your curse
To Me?

ANNE EDDY

LOUISE EFIRD

3

The Eve of St. John

Midnight dark and forest still,
wild the chants from hooded forms
that came to celebrate the eve.
The wind sits backward in the back pew,
backwards the prayer
and black the candle
lighting the taloned feet of the goat.
Red the altar
and blood-red the shadows on the wind.
Trial by fire! Trial by fire!
Black the candle and black the night,
blood-red the voices that sing the hymn,
Condemned! Condemned! They are all condemned
God is dog, and I am the high priest,
Virgin, I will burn your body for a lamb.

STELLA JEFFERSON



4

NUDE
Ink on Rice Paper
Lily Wiley

Sometimes—
When the wind
Of early winter
Is near,
And dark cloud-hands
Mold the sea
Into blackened clay figures
That smash in broken pieces
On the shore,
I wonder if the sea-palaces are still there
Between the ugly sea-shapes—
I saw them once.

Sand-palaces
That curled
In ocean waves—
Mists
Telling of a secret world—
Somewhere—

But now
I watch a sea-beast
Rise from the spray
Of winter seas—
Just dead
Or just born—
Quivering from pain
Of mud-winds.

Only a while longer
To feel the wind—
Only a while longer

ANNE EDDY

What would have been mine
I gave to the sea
who couched your loneliness
granting a oneness
denied by me

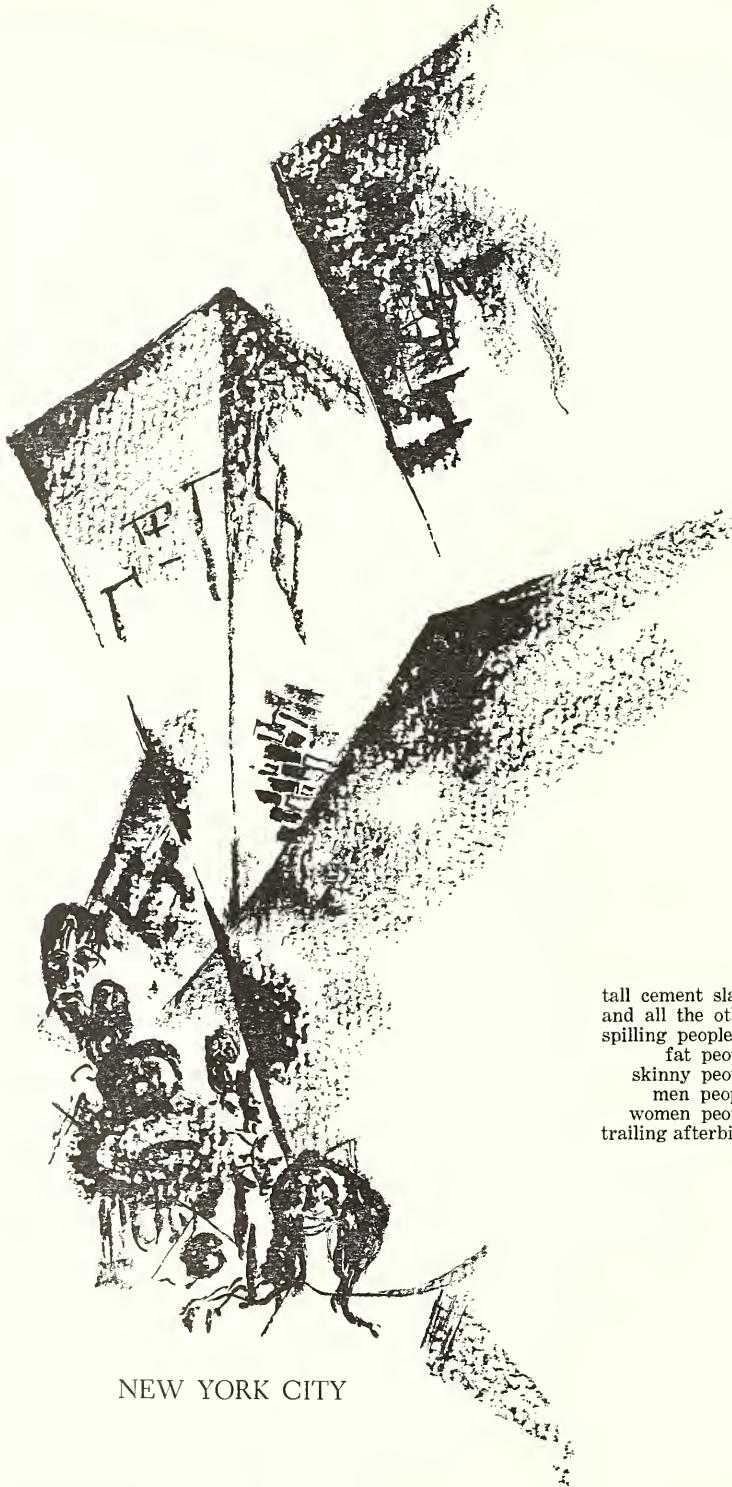
I tasted of brine
from the mouth of the sea
It dried on my tongue
in crust
You smelled the brine
from the thighs of the sea
and it answered your sense
like musk
From being to Being
I saw you grow
and lean to the lap of the sea
one who loved you
and let you in
leaving her brine with me

LOUISE EFIRD

Too Late

too late, you say, to kiss the arms of Laocoon
and rub THE GREEK'S still-wet paint against my breasts
too late to be Leda
smiling and crying beneath the feathered beast
too late (do not tell me) to mount the winged horse
and ride the melting sky
no
no
it is not too late to swim back
fathomless
and depthless
to
anguished
breathless
marbled
Adam

MARTHA ALICE MILES



NEW YORK CITY

tall cement slabs
and all the other impotent erections
spilling people on the already-peopled sidewalks
 fat people
 skinny people
 men people
 women people
trailing afterbirth 'til their afterlife yawns

MARTHA ALICE MILES

The Column

The Column stood in the center
of everything
that they knew.

It supported all civilization
all culture
that they knew.

The Building divided and re-divided
continually
like a cell.

It held the people that existed
all throughout
block on block.

The people never really knew
who built it
but it was.

All they knew was that the Column
in the center
held it up.

The priests taught them from babies
the only truth
that really was.

The Column there in the center
could hear all
thoughts and words.

In all the time that was recorded
in the books
that they read,

Once, they say, it had answered
crys of men
in the Building.

When the Column was displeased,
the Building shook
til cracks appeared.

Almost everyone believed the Column
held the Building
above their heads,

But one said he thought the Building
held up the Column
in the center.

The others fell on him and tore
his eyes—out
before the Column.

They looked humbly up for commendation
for blood let
in adoration.

The liberated eyes read words
on the Column
in the center.

There were cryptic ancient letters
on the base
“In God we trust.”

FAYE DYSON



The Marsh King's Daughter

The nightcool air fingers my curtain,
The sound of wind across bird backs
Feathers me,
While the dark cocoon of sleep begins to spin.
Ponds and pools,
Rivers and Runnels
Ripple the round warm caves of my sleep,
And along the shore
A white canoe pauses;
The golden-slipper fish plunge deep.

I am alone in a water canyon,
In the deep drifts of plummet echo.
I rise a little in this lonely sea,
But a quilt of marsh elder subdues me.

My little dress is of white linen,
With blue silk stitching upon the hem;
My poor little dress,
White and thin and dim.
My sandals are buckled with marsh grass,
Long green thongs,
Spangled in the sheen wing of dragonflies,
Studded in the brilliants of peacock eyes.

As I sleep,
My hair floats out in a wild luminous corona;
I am a daffodill, a jonquil, a milkweed;
I am a total eclipse.
A ruddy yellow ellipse.

My lover must walk on stilts
Or fly with wings of wax
To reach me.
But the marsh would eat his stilts
And the sun would drink the wax.

His voice runs in and out with the sea,
Drifts in and out with my breath.
It is a soft death
To sleep this way:
The feel of the sea night and day,
The tones of his call to rise, fall.

Perhaps I could tie my little dress
Into a white sail,
A small thin sail
To propel me across the marsh.
But if I reached the harder land,
There could be no anchor.
I would be a strange water child,
A woman from a far country.

So I shall sleep here
In the warm cocoon of marsh grass.
When the storks come in spring,
Their sharp cries will fling
This sleep from me.
My little dress will wither away,
The blue silks will shred;
My new body will step gently
Over the thin white dead.

Hymn To Hecate's Apostles

And so,
the flame greedily ate,
The smell of fired-flesh
spiraling up
From the gray-stoned
square of some forgotten,
Half-dusty, half-clean town.
Dogs barking
While the sparks multiplied —
And the woman screamed —
eternally screamed —
And the pious thought it sport,
to watch the witch die . . .
To leave the square —
afterwards . . .
And hang clean, white aprons
on pegs —
Behind the doors.

And then,
Somewhere else,
in a shadowy place,
They drove the stake
deeply, slashingly
Into the blue-veined bosom.
Like a silver-sided fish,
up . . . down . . .
up . . . down . . .
Catching the light,
hypnotically gleaming
Each time the axe went
up . . . down . . .
Pious men,
in pious labor,
Pounding the witch's heart,
Into black, fragrant earth.
Tomorrow —
chopping wood
with the same axe,
Sweating self-righteously.

Halloweens,
long ago,
I waited long hours
To see the witches,
Scudding across the moon . . .
Hoping to catch
The evil trumpet-tone
of their laughter . . .
Wanting to know
they were there.
But —
they never came . . .
they never came . . .
White I watched,
Waited —
But I felt them —
smelled their fragrance
Of black, flying skirts —
And lost caves —
And hideous fascination.

Today —
They have come;
Disguised:
Fine-nostriled noses,
Not hooked or warted.
And red-pointed nails,
Or else —
Clean, browned hands,
Motherly, competent.
Pillow-feathered bodies,
Sweetly legged
And limber —
Like delicate grass.
Cultivated skin,
China thin.



They have come,
And I know . . .
The laughter like dry leaves
Against the moon.
The fumes of black
When they move.
The ancient glitter
In new eyes.
Like the flames in the square,
The axe in the sun . . .
I know . . .
I know . . .
They must die.
By the axe —
By the flames —

Then, I turn,
Catching my mirrored shadow.
Seeing the cultivated skin
Of myself —
The small, red nails,
The body of myself,
Soft as grass
With blue-veined bosom . . .
And from the moon,
The witches ride,
And I am fascinated
By the sweet, dark power
In my blood.
Doomed to be as they . . .
Yet —
Knowing,
Always knowing . . .

Brush and Ink
Beverly Wright



FIGURE STUDY
Pen, Brush, and Ink
Betty Jane Gardner

SANTI
Anne Eddy

The feel of the dark animal against Santi's face made his skin bumpy and warm. His Uncle Louie had given him Chumpie on his last birthday. "You been a good boy, Santi, and I got you a real nice hamster for being a good boy", Uncle Louie had said. Santi hadn't ever owned an animal before. He had seen them squirming around the glass cages stacked together in the basement of Rose's dime store. He had even touched them when nobody was looking; he had liked the hot, soft feel of their heads and the sticky warmth of their tongues. But this was the first time he could hold and rub one and not be scared someone was going to think he was taking something that wasn't his. All the people on the block always treated him like he was no-good like they did all the guys he knew. Someone was always yelling that some lousy kid had stolen a billfold or those cheap jewelry things they spread out on the counter like hunks of shiny candy or anything else anyone was missing. But now Santi didn't have to stick his hand in the little glass cages to feel the brown shaking bodies. He laughed as Chumpie wriggled down his arm and dangled from his hand for a minute before he fell onto the cement step. Scooping Chumpie into his hand, Santi held his breath while he listened to the fast thumping of the little heart against the brown fur.

The buildings seemed to quiver in the rising waves of dusty, sticky heat. Santi twisted his back against reddish-brown bricks that fell in a tumbling wall to meet cement steps someone had stuck between the sidewalk and the old apartment house he lived in with his mother and older sister and Uncle Louie. People were real nice to his mother; they always said, "Morning, Mrs. DelSesto", and smiled real hard at Santi if he was with her. Santi smiled back when he thought of those yellow-toothed grins that he saw only when Mama was there. Big women always wanted other big women to think they was real kind and real nice to everybody. Most of them was *really* big, too, and Santi liked to act just like them — waddling down the street after them shaking his hips in big circles until they yelled he was a stupid, fresh kid and shake their fists at him until he would roll with laughing. It served them right — acting so god-awful pure one minute and then accusing kids o' stealing something they didn't find. He bet they hid the stuff themselves just so they could yack it was a rotten neighborhood.

God, the sun was hot. Santi scratched the oily sweat dripping off his face with fast scrapping movements. He was glad his skin was brown already cause he could sit here all day and not get those blisters he saw on light people. Uncle Louie had told him his Papa had been born in Italy and never could speak English good. Uncle Louie said Santi looked just like his papa — his thick black hair curled around his face just the same. He was gonna be short, too, but his papa had been real big and strong. And Uncle Louie would say, "Santi, boy, you gonna be skinny—too bad you look so little", and then would laugh and mess up Santi's hair. Santi didn't like Uncle Louie to laugh at him, and he would always run out to the street and hide under the steps and think how he was going to beat up some big guy when Uncle Louie was looking and he wouldn't laugh.

Chumpie squirmed under Santi's loose shirt and made him jump. Santi had forgotten he was sitting here; he guessed he'd been sleeping a little. Very gently, he reached his hand up to catch Chumpie and pressed him to his face. "Yeah, it's real hot, Chumpie—it's lousy hot." And the boy stroked Chumpie, trying to cover him with a little shade from his shirt. A giggle seemed to spin up on one of the heat waves, and

Santi jerked his head up toward the sound. Five grinning mouths stood around the steps.

"Hey, baby, what's a matter with ya — ya hiding or some'in? Hey, kids, Baby's playing with a rat — a brown, dirty rat."

The boys, clumped around the sidewalk, looked like fat little toads whose lips were bulging from swollen mouths. And then all five mouths snapped together fast, when a monstrous foot lifted itself onto the stoop . . . and another against the iron railing. Santi's eyes grew bigger and bigger as he stared at those feet—he kept his head down so he wouldn't have to look at the face raised somewhere above those feet. He stuffed Chumpie in his pocket and turned that side away from the street so they couldn't see Chumpie—Maybe they'd think he'd run away. "Okay, kid, let's have the rat," and the big feet moved up another step. Santi could feel those horrible eyes burning him hotter than the brick . . . he could feel his own eyes getting wet as he clutched Chumpie tighter and tighter. The heat of hand and furry body melted together, and Santi could only hear the beating of fast little heart and hot pulsing hand. Slumping against the railing, Santi closed his eyes hard, pretended he was choking back a yawn and pushed Chumpie a little deeper in his pocket. The feet came nearer and nearer . . . Santi tensed . . . waited . . . Slowly opening his eyes Santi saw the big feet running toward the alley across the street. Uncle Louie's voice boomed after them."And don't you never come back — you lousy bully." Santi turned away quickly so Uncle Louie wouldn't see him being a sissy — and tears rolled along side of the oily sweat.

Today was Sunday and Mrs. DelSesto and Santi always went to mass on Sunday. The church was dark and Santi had to squint his eyes to see anything . . . bodies squirmed and twisted and heads nodded back and forth, back and forth. Santi guessed they was all catching up on their sleep — but they was all scared to stay home in bed cause the priest might get angry; and my god, if the priest was mad at you, think what Jesus would do. The only thing that wasn't bobbing up and down was all them marble saints staring real hard at everything with cold, funny eyes. Santi bet they was glad they couldn't really hear the priests yacking up there.

Oh-h-h. Santi felt something stick in his side and looked up to see his Mama jabbing her elbow at him. A very un-church-like whisper followed the jabbing—"Santi, you listen good, boy. And don't you sit there so dumb-lookin' next time you're supposed to be kneelin'." Santi looked around slowly—he wondered if anybody had seen him sitting there when he was supposed to be praying. Slipping his hand in his Sunday pants' pocket, he felt a throbbing, furry lump. Santi's mouth twisted in a little grin — at least Chumpie didn't get scolded when he didn't kneel. He could sleep all he wanted to right here where everybody else was pretending they was so holy and seeing just about as much as all those saints and their marble eyes.

People seemed to spill over the church steps; babies cried . . . mothers blessed themselves . . . babies cried louder . . . mothers told babies to shut up in low whispers as they smiled at the priests. Thank god it was over. Santi told his Mama he had to go someplace real fast and shoved his way through a bunch of fat little girls who stood blinking at Father Castriota. He wanted to push one of those fat pigtailed heads right in the priest's big stomach — he bet he'd lose that smirky look fast.

The heat waves slapped against Santi's face, and sweat spotted his Sunday pants. He stumbled over a

beer case that lay rotting in the alley . . . cans spilled in uneven piles, dripping rusty beer against the cement. Santi grabbed at his pant's pocket — Chumpie wasn't there. But then a little scraping sound made Santi jerk his head toward the side of the alley. Chumpie stared up from the jagged edge of a beer can with a hurt, funny look. "Chumpie, you crazy Chumpie—you look like you was drunk" Santi giggled as he stuffed the little beer-smelling lump back in his pocket. "We better hurry, Chumpie, cause Uncle Louie says this morning she was going real soon." And Santi started running again through the dirty heat . . . the wind streaked his mouth with dust so badly that it dripped in brownish spit down his chin.

The wind seemed cooler as Santi got near the Bay; he stopped running so fast and leaned against one of the warehouses that lined the street around the docks. The salt-smell made him feel hungry, but he could only find five pennies left in his pocket. He walked slower now, running his fingers along the cracks in the brick. The street ended in front of the big wharf where all the foreign ships docked . . . She was still there just like Uncle Louie said — her curving steel sides cut the water into white bubbly waves of air and spray. Santi loved this ship most of all; she came all the way from Portugal every year. Her crew of black-dressed sailors was short and strange looking. They always laughed a lot when they were unloading all the big crates onto the dock. And they always smiled at Santi and let him touch the crates and pretend he was a sailor, too, watching out for all the gold he knew was in those boxes. He'd jump behind the gold and watch and watch . . . sometimes when it would get very dark he'd hear a funny, hollow sound echo back and forth on the dock — just like a wooden leg pacing slowly against the deck of a ship. Then he'd creep around the dock and look behind every crate and then lie on his stomach and listen — but all he could ever hear was the waves hitting the pilings.

Today Santi climbed the stone breakwater that jutted out into the bay. He liked to sit there and dangle his feet in the salty water; sometimes he pulled up one of those stringy green pieces of seaweed that was floating around and popped the air filled leaves that hung off it in clumps. It was fun to feel the hard leaves turn soft and mushy in his fingers. There were even rats chasing each other under the rocks that sprawled on top of the jetty . . . they looked almost like Chumpie except they were all grey and mean. Santi was a little afraid of them because he'd heard they'd make you real sick if you played with them . . . Uncle Louie was even scared of them.

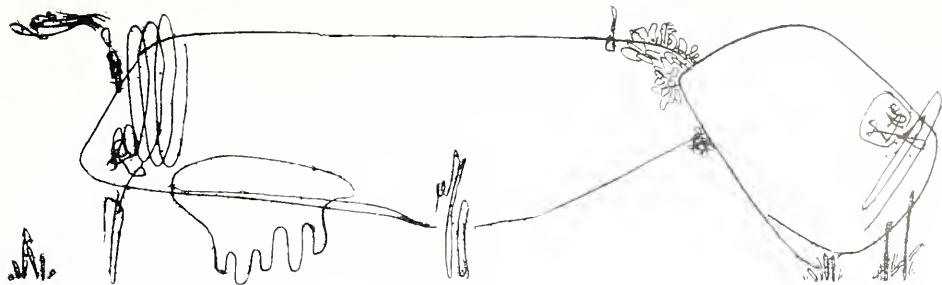
But the sun was hot now and it was hard to see anything unless you squinted your eyes tight — the rocks shivered in darting white flashes of heat — Santi felt all warm and sleepy inside — the sun beat down hotter — hotter — sweat was trickling down his nose until it ran off under the rocks where it was all damp and sunless. An army of grey, laughing rats fell with tiny splashes into the foam. They all winked their lidless eyes at Santi as they tumbled, pile after pile of grey wriggling bodies . . . teeth seemed to scrape at the rocks, reddish foam spurted up and air clotted with specks of grey whirling feet.

It hurt worse and worse — Santi shook all over, and then his eyes squinted open. A sick feeling his his stomach. Big feet, the feet on the stoop, against the iron railing, were ground into the white flashing heat. "Hey, kids, I found one — I found another rat, a brown, dirty rat" — laughter echoed from rock to rock. Santi raised his eyes to fat hands that squeezed Chumpie in slow, awful movements. The

pounding of the waves was the only sound now, and Chumpie's brown, wide eyes winked at Santi as he tumbled after the little grey army into the foam.

Santi knew those stupid fat women was going to yell he was stealing something. But he waited until they weren't looking this time. The little glass cages were dirty . . . and the brown furry bodies smelled so bad that almost everybody stayed away from the basement counters in the heat. But Santi giggled as he rubbed the little wriggling bodies . . . and a little army of brown soldiers walked across the docks, dropping into the foam. They was all salty and funny looking and Santi knew they was all hiding under the damp rocks where no heat could make them sick.





COW
Etching
Phyllis Taylor

Partial Lessons

The faces are wary,
neither cursed nor blessed
by the hours that go untold.
There is a stain on the butcher's linen
that must go uncleansed
by blood or water.

The faces —
the hours weigh upon them.
There is something lost
in the waiting.

And my own life,
knotted,
neither gains nor loses
by remembering.
If there was something
that can be no more,
let it be broken and shared.
Let the reason be,
when it is lost,
that the pieces were too small to keep.

SIELLA JEFFERSON

13

Night Light

My lantern flickers and sputters
A dimly glowing beam
Casting in my sleep
Shadows on a dream.

SUSAN ELIZABETH DAVIS



BEETLES
Pen and Ink
Nancy Neil MacMillan

Poem for My Daughter

In the pale April rain,
I walk the deer park.
Silently, on buckhorn and cloverknobs,
Honeysuckle, maypop, sage, and scotchbroom,
Silently, the thin rain falls.

In the cool echo of rain doves,
I remember my name,
My name in summer, at evening.
There the bee never murmurs.
And his hot wild honey
Is figged, peared, appled,
Syrup and sunjell dappled.
Here the wet wild bee
Flutters and falls.

The birds lay blue eggs, I know,
And the birds' blue shells
Were part of that simple blue
Seen in a wide-washed sky and infant eye.
And the warm palm-clouds swung their fronds
Before the royal, marching sun.
Still the clouds swing:

They turn and face east for one half,
Then, turn, and face west for another.

You only know rock pools
Where red fish glimmer cold.
And little girls bend to fret the ripples
Under a freckled sun.

You are sweetly with me,
Here in the deer park,
In the rain-pale, green-dark evening.
The red fish feint away,
And you blame it on some Jack-with-a-lantern elf.

Rain doves call wearily.
And my summer name settles wornly
Among the damp pale trees,
Too nervously stirred by a night-spiced breeze.

HEATHER ROSS MILLER

Looking Up Into The Willows I Saw

looking up into the willows I saw
looking up into the limbs
I saw
you and me and red velvet flowers
and the universe

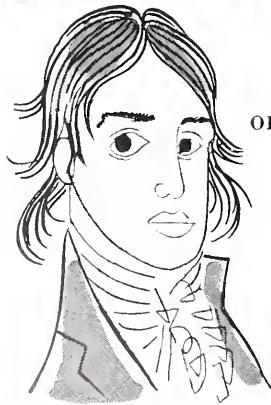
you and I and the red flowers were good
you and I and the willows were good

MARTHA ALICE MILES



WE THREE GO BOPPING
Etching
Phyllis Taylor

COLERIDGE



on Life Savers:

"'Tis sweeter
far to me!"

from *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, part VII



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